

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /080 W  
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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1429  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0279

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CA  
SUBJ: BARE KNUCKLES IN QUEBEC

1. QUEBEC MINISTER OF LABOR PIERRE-MARC JOHNSON TODAY TOLD ME THAT HE "ANTICIPATES A ROUGH SESSION" WITH TRADITIONALLY PUGNACIOUS HOSPITAL WORKERS AND TEACHERS UNIONS IN NEGOTIATIONS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN EARLY IN 1979. TREASURY, HE SAID, IS DETERMINED TO HOLD THE LINE ON PAY INCREASES EVEN AT THE RISK OF A STRIKE. HOWEVER, JOHNSON IS HOPEFUL THAT A BITTER CONFRONTATION SIMILAR TO THOSE OF 1966 AND 1976 CAN BE AVOIDED. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS NOW SUPPORTIVE OF GOVERNMENT HOLDING THE LINE WITH ALREADY PRIVILEGED PARAPUBLIC WORKERS. ALSO, RECENTLY ADOPTED LABOR LEGISLATION IS AIMED AT AVOIDING CONFRONTATION BY SETTING UP ELABORATE NEGOTIATING PROCEDURES AND FIXED NEGOTIATING TIMETABLE.

2. CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP OF TEACHERS UNION (CEQ) ALSO CITED AS FACTOR FAVORING SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN AUTOMATIC CONFRONTATION. RECENTLY DEPOSED PRESIDENT OF CEQ, YVES CHARBONNEAU, WOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN PLANNING FOR A STRIKE, JOHNSON CLAIMED. THE NEW PRESIDENT, ROBERT GAULIN, WHO IS CERTAINLY NO TOADY, WILL AT LEAST CAREFULLY WEIGH ADVANTAGES  
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AGAINST DISADVANTAGES BEFORE RESORTING TO ULTIMATE WEAPON OF A STRIKE.

3. TO ILLUSTRATE CHARBONNEAU'S CYNICISM JOHNSON RECOUNTED THAT ONE OF CHARBONNEAU'S LIEUTENANTS, SHORTLY BEFORE HIS CHIEF'S DEFEAT, ASKED MINISTER WHEN THE PQ PLANNED TO HOLD ITS REFERENDUM. WHEN ASKED WHY HE WISHED TO KNOW

THE CEQ INTERLOCUTOR WARNED THAT THE GOQ HAD BETTER ACCEDE TO CEQ DEMANDS. OTHERWISE, PQ COULD BE FACED WITH A CRIPPLING STRIKE WHICH COULD SPOIL CHANCES OF REFERENDUM SUCCESS. CHARBONNEAU HAD USED SIMILAR TACTICS, JOHNSON SAID, TO DEVASTATING EFFECT AGAINST BOURASSA IPRIOR TO 1976 ELECTION. ALTHOUGH JOHNSON DID NOT SAY SO DIRECTLY, I SUSPECT THAT THIS BLACKMAIL ATTEMPT MAY HAVE TRIGGERED PQ DECISION TO SUPPORT CANDIDACY OF GAULIN AND TO UNSEAT TROUBLESOME CHARBONNEAU. GAULIN ALSO MAY BE TEMPTED TO USE SOME VARIATION OF THIS TACTIC, JOHNSON CONCEDED, BUT HE IS NOT LIKELY TO OPT AS INSTINCTIVELY FOR SHAKEDOWN TACTICS AND CONFRONTATION AS DID CHARBONNEAU.

4. COMMENT: UNDER A SUAVE AND FRIENDLY EXTERIOR, ONE SENSES THAT JOHNSON IS A TOUGH, HIGHLY INTELLIGENT OPERATOR. SHOULD HE SUCCEED IN PREVENTING A POLITICALLY DAMAGING CONFRONTATION IN CRUCIAL PARAPUBLIC NEGOTIATIONS, HE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BECOME RENE LEVESQUE'S UNCROWNED DAUPHIN.  
MCNAMARA

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, WAGES, NEGOTIATIONS  
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**Draft Date:** 16 aug 1978  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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